purcase of 500 digital cameras which had been purchased at a cost higher than their actual price and most of these cameras were not found in working order;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any action has been initiated in this matter; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) A pseudonymous complaint alleging irregularites in the procurement of Information Technology stores and 500 digital cameras by the Army Headquarters was received in the Ministry in July, 2002. As per extant instructions of the Central vigilance Commission, no action is required to be taken on such complaints. However, the Army Headquarters have ordered a court of inquiry to inquire into all the major IT procurements made for the Army, including ascertaining the facts of the complaint. Further course of action will depen upon the findings of the court of inquiry.

Recruitment of skilled manpower in IAF

1524. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Air Force is initiating the largest ever recruitment drive to overcome the shortage of skilled manpower;

(b) if so, whether such a drive will be limited to the Air Force or Army and Navy will also be launching such recruitment drive with a view to present a youthfull profile and fill existing vacancies; and

(c) whether such shortage of skilled manpower would result in compromising our combat capabilities to any extent?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir. No such recruitment drive is planned. However, in order to attract the best talent, recruitment related publicity is a regular and ongoing features in IAF.

(b) Army also has not launched any such recruitment drive. However, a large number of recuritment rallies are conducted regularly throughout the year.

Navy also carries out additional publicity and recruitment effort to attract more candidates.

(c) Shortages of manpower will not effect combat capability to any extent.

Securing air corridors

1525. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that despite existence of seven Air Defence Identification Zones (ADIZs) all along country's territorial border to detect an incoming flight, there is a fairly wide air-corridor in country's South-Eastern region to let any enemy plane sneak into the Indian airspace right upto Bhopal according to Security Experts;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the fresh steps taken by Government to enhance lower level air surveillance capability of the Indian Air Force?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) At present there are eight Indian Air Defence Identification Zones (ADIZs) over Indian airspace. Central and South-Eastern Regions have lesser traffic density and low threat perception. However, Indian Air Force has adequate air defence measures in place to thwart mis-adventures of any aircraft in these sectors.

(c) Modernization and enhancement of air surveillance capability is a continuous endeavour of the Government.

Decrease in terrorist activities after withdrawal of troops from border

1526. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether withdrawal of forces from border has resulted in any decrease in the terrorist activities; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?